

*Duke University Medical Center Department of Surgical Pathology Laboratories***Procedure: Surgical Pathology Recut Slide Requests**

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**PRINCIPLE:**

It is the policy of Duke University Health System that original slides and blocks remain in our files as part of the patient's permanent medical record. Recut sections are sent to other medical institutions or physicians upon request. Exceptions are made only as detailed below.

Requests for a copy of our report only (not recuts) are occasionally received from the patient or from another medical institution caring for the patient. Such requests are usually directed to Medical Records. However, to aid another physician who is trying to take care of a patient, we commonly FAX a copy of our report to clinicians within Duke University Medical Center or elsewhere. Surgical Pathology at 919-681-3133 can send out such reports.

Requests for recut sections fall into five main categories

1. Continuing patient care at another institution
2. Consultation from another pathologist, requested by one of the following:
  - the patient
  - a Duke physician
  - the Duke pathologist who signed out the case
3. Oncology treatment protocol enrollment requirements
4. Research requests
5. Requests from law firms and document retrieval firms

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**PROCEDURE - STEPWISE:**

**1. Recuts for continuing patient care at another institution.**

- These requests come to the pathology office from the patient themselves or from their Duke physician. Phone calls or letters received anywhere in the department requesting such referrals should be forwarded to the Slide File Room (Rm M020 Davison) at 919-681-5223.
- A standard form is used to record the recut request and each step in our response (Appendix A). Recut requests are also documented in MAW3.
- Recuts are prepared and reviewed for appropriate content before they are sent out. In most instances, that review is performed by a Duke pathologist. Exceptions are:
  - Dermopath cases, which are reviewed by the dermatopathologists
  - Renal cases, which are reviewed by the pathologist covering renal service.
- A form letter generated by the MAW3 system accompanies the slides and copy of our report. A copy of the reviewing pathologist's report is requested. The letter specifies that the patient should be billed for the review.
- When reports are received in our department, copies are sent to the sites listed below.
  - The pathologist in charge of QI data
  - The original pathologist, who informs the Duke physician and issues an addendum, if needed
  - Surgical Pathology Report files
  - Medical records
- In rare cases, recut sections do not show the necessary findings. In that instance, Dr. Gottfried, or the reviewing pathologist chooses appropriate original slides to be sent as needed. Whenever original slides are sent, it is required that they be returned.

**2. Recuts for consultations**

- When a patient, a Duke physician or a Duke pathologist desire a consultation by a pathologist at another institution, the recuts are prepared and sent out by the Duke pathologist.
- The letter which accompanies the request should specify whether the patient or Duke department of pathology should be billed. Billing information is included when appropriate. A copy of the reviewing pathologist's report should be requested, even if the consultation is taking place at the patient or Duke physician's request.
- When the consultation report is received, an addendum or revised report should be issued, the Duke physician should be notified and the report should document that they have been notified. Copies of the report should be sent to
  - The pathologist in charge of QI data
  - Surgical Pathology files
  - Medical records

**3. Oncology protocol requirements** – protocol requests are handled by a designated pathologist or the individual pathologist who signed out the case with the following exceptions:

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- Breast protocols – the designated pathologist for breast pathology
- POG protocols – Dr. Madden
- GOG protocols – Dr. Robboy and Dr. Bentley

Paraffin blocks are sometimes requested to enroll a patient in a treatment protocol. Before releasing a block:

- The protocol staff should investigate whether unstained sections can be provided in stead
- The protocol pathologist should ascertain whether the original slides are available in the file, and whether sufficient tissue would remain in our files at Duke for future investigations if the block is released.
- On rare occasions, it may not be possible to provide a paraffin block and the protocol office will be informed.

Return of all paraffin blocks is requested.

**4. Research Request**

- Requests for slides or blocks for research, received from outside Duke Health System, should be referred to the designated pathologist's office. The researchers will be expected to document IRB approval at their institution. Once that is received, a pathologist will ascertain what materials are present in our files and which may be recut for research purposes. No blocks will be sent out of Duke University Health System for research purposes. If sufficient tissue is present, the outside researcher will be offered recut sections, prepared by the research lab for the usual fees.
- When a Duke University Health System researcher wishes to recut paraffin blocks for patients of Duke Hospital, the request must be reviewed by a designated pathologist or the pathologist who signed the case out. They will ascertain whether sufficient tissue is present to recut the blocks.

**5. Requests from law firms and document retrieval firms.**

- All requests from law offices or retrieval firms are sent to the Chief of Surgical Pathology's office for review and response.
- An appropriate authorization for release of medical records must accompany the request. It must meet the following criteria (including, but not limited too)
  - Signed within the last year
  - Signed by the patient, a legal guardian or the executor of the patient's estateXerox copies of the authorization are accepted.
- Recut sections only (not original slides or paraffin blocks) are provided when available. Original slides and/or paraffin blocks are provided only upon receipt of a Court Order or subpoena from a court with appropriate jurisdiction. Questions regarding such documents are referred to the office of the hospital counsel.
- Risk Management is queried in most cases to ascertain whether there is any litigation or risk management review underway in the Duke Health System
- Charges to the law firms include laboratory fees for preparing slides and an administrative fee for pulling blocks and records, clerical work and a pathologist's review.

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- If we have slides from another hospital in our files, they are not provided to a lawyer except under court order or subpoena.